

<b>Institution: Newcastle University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: UoA28 Modern Languages and Linguistics</b>
<b>Title of case study: The <i>Talk of the Toon</i>: Enhancing the Linguistic Cultural Heritage of North East England</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p><i>Talk of the Toon</i> is an online resource that preserves the cultural heritage of North Eastern English dialects giving users unprecedented access to multimedia material spanning five decades. Researchers collaborated with regional museums in this initiative during the <i>Diachronic Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English</i> (DECTE) project (2010-2012), thereby providing them with new avenues for the public to benefit from their collections. The pedagogical resources generated have also significantly benefitted primary and secondary education. Building on regional engagement initiatives through targeted national/international workshops, the impact has also reached beyond the HEI and region to a wider range of educators and students worldwide.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The underpinning research constructed and standardised a state-of-the-art electronic linguistic corpus, i.e. a collection of written and/or spoken language material. The initial corpus-construction project generated the <i>Newcastle Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English</i>, 2001-2005 (NECTE) (<b>1, 3, 4</b>). This corpus amalgamated two legacy databases, and was primarily intended as an academic resource. Since the NECTE site went live in 2005 (<a href="http://research.ncl.ac.uk/necte/">http://research.ncl.ac.uk/necte/</a>), researchers have used the material extensively in teaching and research. Following this, a new corpus was compiled, the <i>Newcastle Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English 2</i>, 2007-2009 (NECTE2) (<a href="http://research.ncl.ac.uk/necte2/">http://research.ncl.ac.uk/necte2/</a>). Based on a collection of interviews conducted in the Tyneside area since 2007, this research added another time slice to the existing NECTE corpus (<b>2</b>).</p> <p>Building on the success of these sites, researchers undertook the new DECTE project (2010-2012) (<a href="http://research.ncl.ac.uk/decte/">http://research.ncl.ac.uk/decte/</a>). This initiative developed the NECTE/NECTE2 corpora to improve their sustainability by uniting the data in a single corpus and augmenting its content. As a result, DECTE is a state-of-the-art resource, containing features absent from many other corpora, such as aligned digital audio and text (the ability to see the transcribed text and hear the recording simultaneously). Moreover, it is one of only two databases worldwide containing speech samples from speakers born across 100 years of time and it is unique in preserving and thus enhancing the cultural and linguistic diversity of the North East. The creation of this resource has shed new light on both generational differences and community-wide social changes in the region from 1895 to the present which make it important for heritage preservation purposes and for raising the awareness of regional distinctiveness amongst the wider public. It is the latter point that drove another key objective of the DECTE project, which was to widen the impact of the NECTE/NECTE2 corpora beyond academia by presenting the content in more accessible formats to divergent user groups. This was achieved via a new public website, launched in October 2011, <i>Talk of the Toon</i> (<a href="http://research.ncl.ac.uk/decte/toon">http://research.ncl.ac.uk/decte/toon</a>) which involved linking the corpora with digitised multimedia materials from the collections of three heritage institutions: Beamish Museum (<a href="http://www.beamish.org.uk/">http://www.beamish.org.uk/</a>), the North East Film Archive (<a href="http://www.northeastfilmarchive.com/">http://www.northeastfilmarchive.com/</a>), and Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (<a href="http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/">http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/</a>). The academic DECTE corpus and <i>Talk of the Toon</i> sites are recognised world-wide as an invaluable repository by academic researchers, educators, the heritage sector and the wider public and it is through these sites that impact is being claimed.</p> <p>The principal investigator on these projects was Prof. Karen Corrigan. Prof. Joan Beal, Dr Isabelle Buchstaller and Dr Hermann Moisl acted as co-investigators. Corrigan and Moisl have been employed at Newcastle for the duration of the projects while Beal and Buchstaller left Newcastle in 2001 and 2011, respectively.</p>

**3. References to the research**

- 1) Allen, W.H., J.C. Beal, K.P. Corrigan, W. Maguire and H.L. Moisl (2007) 'A Linguistic "Time-Capsule": The Newcastle Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English', in J.C. Beal, K.P. Corrigan and H.L. Moisl (eds.) *Creating and Digitising Language Corpora, Vol. 2: Diachronic Databases*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.16-48.
- 2) Barnfield, K. & Buchstaller, I. (2010) 'Intensifiers on Tyneside: Longitudinal developments and new trends', *English World-Wide* 31: 252-287. DOI: 10.1075/eww.31.2.02
- 3) Beal, J.C., Corrigan, K.P. & Moisl, H.L. (eds.) (2007) *Creating and Digitizing Language Corpora, Vol. 1: Synchronic Databases*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- 4) Beal, J.C., Corrigan, K.P. & Moisl, H.L. (eds.) (2007) *Creating and Digitizing Language Corpora, Vol. 2: Diachronic Databases*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Outputs 1, 3 and 4 can be supplied by the HEI on request. The research projects went through a rigorous peer review process before being awarded. A summary of key grants follows:

Principal Investigator	Grant Title	Sponsor	Period of Grant	Total Value
Karen Corrigan	The Newcastle Electronic Corpus of English (RE/AN6422/APN11776) (End of Award Report graded as 'outstanding')	AHRC	2001-2005	£250,740
Karen Corrigan	The Diachronic Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English (AH/H037691/1)	AHRC	2010-2012	£185,037

**4. Details of the impact**

The underpinning research has produced impact via two state-of-the-art resources: (i) the DECTE corpus, primarily intended for an academic audience and (ii) the *Talk of the Toon* website, which has made the collection accessible to the general public. The reach and significance of the impact lies in the preservation of the North East's distinctive linguistic cultural heritage through informing and influencing the content of education beyond the HEI. This has been achieved by providing valuable learning resources for teachers and educators from primary, secondary, FE and HE levels, thereby extending the study of the region's linguistic and cultural heritage in educational institutions in the North East and beyond.

*Informing and Influencing the Form or Content of Education*

The *Talk of the Toon* website has been accessed 3882 times by 2269 unique visitors between 17 December 2012 and 31 July 2013. There have been 27,248 page views (average page view per visit was 9 minutes). Although visitors from the school sectors of North Eastern England constitute the largest number of users so far at 28% of the total, high usage is also recorded by visits from York, Toronto at 13% reflecting the fact that the site is also heavily used by educators and their students there. Other visitors hail from 16 countries worldwide, including Australia, Canada, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the USA.

The website was designed with input from both examiners and teachers in order to provide students and educators from primary to HE level with resources featuring relevant cross-curriculum materials, including: (i) activities relating to a variety of subjects in primary and secondary education, incorporating English, IT and history; (ii) topic-based browsing of the data with related visual material; (iii) linked audio, text, photographic and video data; (iv) primary source materials for use in student project work and classroom demonstration; (v) familiarity with/provision of teaching materials related to local linguistic/cultural heritage; and (vi) awareness of the link between the North East's historical development and its distinctive dialect. To ensure that the project effected real change through take-up in usage of the website in education, between 2010 and 2012 the project researchers held a series of outreach sessions, sixth form conferences and teacher CPD days with educators and students. Evidence of the impact value of these workshops can be seen in the teacher and student feedback statements from these engagement activities.

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

Asked if the resources demonstrated were useful and whether they would make use of them in the classroom, 95% of teachers responded positively (**IMP1**).

**Primary Schools:** In May 2011, four groups of primary school pupils (94 in total) and their teachers participated in workshops on dialect at the Discovery Museum using materials collected in this project that the Learning Officer praised for being “*well thought-through*”, “*inventive*”, and for having “*introduced [the students] to ideas they might not have come across before*” (**IMP2**). Acknowledging changes that the project brought to the museum and its visitors, she noted that the workshops used “*a medium of engagement that we don’t use very often – sound – which is difficult for us to acquire, particularly because of issues over permissions and because it is time consuming to collect*” (**IMP2**). This educational programme has informed young learners’ interaction with, and knowledge of, the importance of dialect within culture. Feedback from participants was positive, with one teacher commenting that “*It links well with developing pupils’ understanding of standard/non-standard English*”. Learning about the differences between accent and dialect was commented on by most children in their feedback forms, as well as their surprise at there being more “Geordie” words than they realised, with one young participant learning that “*people who have posh accents do not need to come from posh places*” (**IMP1**).

**Secondary Schools:** Between March 2011 and July 2012, nine workshops were held with 457 students and 53 teachers. Participant response was enthusiastic with teachers commenting “*Would/will be very useful for language/dialect investigations. Quite a lot of our students investigate North/Tyneside accent and dialect*” and “[*We*] *will write it into our course!*” Student feedback was also positive. At one A-level workshop (April 2011), 73% of the students participating said that they would use the resource for their project work. Students at Central Newcastle High School, for example, commented “*I learnt a lot of useful information to use in my exam*” (A-Level) and “*it allowed me to become more confident in analysing texts*” (AS-level). Subsequent feedback and testimonials collected from teachers and examiners have also been especially positive, and includes evidence that the website has been firmly integrated into schools’ syllabi as a key learning resource around which lessons have been constructed. The research websites have been used for teaching (for example, of accent and dialect), as starter activities and to prompt discussion (**IMP3**). The materials are also used in student project work and language investigations, with one A-level educator commenting, “*The resources area on the schools area of the site is particularly useful for giving [students] some ideas about areas they can study independently*” (**IMP3**). Another teacher from Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College has incorporated the *Talk of the Toon* resources into A/A-S level English Language lessons, including the development of teaching materials and teacher notes. He commented: “*The main usage is introducing the notion of the data investigation project – collecting and trawling through data, selecting an angle and devising a doable question and applying the ‘key constituents’. The data is smashing and it gives students opportunities to approach studying it from all sorts of angles*” (**IMP4**). The use of the resources is confirmed via website hits from Darlington between 17-23 June 2013 which represented 483 visits/4,961 page views (average visit was 9 minutes) with 73.08% of these coming from the College (**IMP5**).

**Continuing Professional Development:** From 2010 to 2012, the research team contributed to three CPD workshops for A-level English Language teachers (102 attendees). The materials from this project formed part of a resource booklet for teachers. As well as citing key outputs from the research (**3**), the DECTE corpus was used to provide example activities for classroom teaching (**IMP6**). Feedback for all three sessions was enthusiastic and positive (**IMP1**), with 82% of teachers at one event (December 2010) agreeing that the material was directly relevant to their teaching. These teachers noted benefits such as: increased knowledge, generation of new ideas to take back to the classroom, and interaction with other teachers and linguistics lecturers (**IMP1**). This is a particularly important benefit since many A-Level teachers only have university training in English Literature, rather than English Language - though they are now expected to also teach the latter on account of the steep rise in popularity of this subject (14,751 examinees in 2003 and 24,382 in 2012). The research has thus helped to improve their teaching as well as their students’ learning.

**HEIs beyond the submitting unit:** The academic corpora have been used widely in HEIs all over the world. From 2008-2013, 75% of the 119 new access requests were from outside Newcastle

University, including users in 24 different countries. The academic and public resources have been promoted by academics for their students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels worldwide, including Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Peru and the Netherlands as well as the US and UK (IMP7). For example, in early 2013 a Professor at York University in Toronto, used the DECTE and *Talk of the Toon* project resources in an integrated undergraduate/postgraduate module on sociolinguistic research methods, where the majority of students used the resources as part of both module assignments. The corpora were described as “an excellent resource for sociolinguistic research, including for students with no knowledge of the variety” [...] “important for having them think about whether to work with education or occupation as a social variable, and think hard about social class. They also had to think about working with decade of birth vs working with age at the time of recording. And they learned a lot about English, including its history (e.g. origins of ‘divn’t’, the ‘-ly’ adverbs, etc.)” (IMP8). Another Professor of English Linguistics at Paris Diderot University, who described the corpora as “a unique resource for the research community” has regularly used the resources in both MA student supervision and teaching, “I have two presentations specifically giving examples from the NECTE corpus exemplifying protocols and fieldwork” (IMP9).

Informing and Influencing the Museum/Cultural Heritage Sectors and the General Public

The collaborative activity with primary students at Discovery Museum (described above), also assisted in their educational outreach goals - as did the production of a *Talk of the Toon* CD and booklet to accompany the initiative now on sale across Tyne and Wear Museums with profits going to the sector. Discovery Museum’s Learning Officer confirmed that “we are always looking for new ways to engage school groups and make our programme as varied as possible, and these workshops added a unique element to the offer” (IMP2). Through the inclusion of photographic resources from existing collections in regional museums, namely, the Tyne and Wear Museums and Archives and the Beamish Museum, the *Talk of the Toon* website and booklet have provided a new outlet for those resources to be appreciated by the public. Furthermore, the project funded the digital preservation of fifty selected films from the North East Film Archive (NEFA), enabling them to subsequently offer footage “to a number of other educational and non-commercial projects at a lower price as transfers had been completed” in the words of their Film Archive Co-ordinator. As with the other collaborating institutions, he added that the project “helped to raise the profile of the NEFA and the work we do”, as well as providing an excellent exemplar of how their materials can be successfully exploited (IMP10).

The project websites, including *Talk of the Toon*, recorded over 139,000 hits between June and October 2012 alone. Between December 2010 and October 2011, researchers delivered five public lectures in Newcastle, Morpeth (county town in Northumberland) and Dublin, attended by a total of 470 people. One of the lectures was posted on iTunesU and has subsequently been downloaded over 1,700 times between October 2011 and the end of July 2013 (IMP5).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- (IMP1) Feedback forms from the thirteen events for teachers and students. Original paper copies of the feedback forms are available on request.
- (IMP2) Factual statement from Learning Officer, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums.
- (IMP3) Feedback forms from teachers on their use of the websites. Original paper copies of the feedback forms are available on request.
- (IMP4) E-mail from teacher at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College (with attached teacher notes and teaching materials).
- (IMP5) Website usage statistics and download records for INSIGHT lectures.
- (IMP6) Fox, S. and Pichler, H. (2012) *Analysing Spoken English: Resources and Techniques for English Language Teachers* – Resource Booklet, London: Queen Mary University of London, with contributions from K. Corrigan, I. Buchstaller and A. Mearns (pages 29-33). Available on request.
- (IMP7) Database of DECTE access requests. Available on request.
- (IMP8) Factual statement from Professor of Linguistics and Women’s Studies, York University, Toronto (with attached course materials).
- (IMP9) Factual statement from Professor of English Linguistics, Paris Diderot University.
- (IMP10) Factual statement from Film Archive Co-Ordinator, NEFA.